

TO ESTABLISH PORTS OF ENTRY IN ARKANSAS AND MISSOURI, AND TO ALLOW DEBENTURE, &c.

{To accompany bill H. R. No. 441.}

MAY 12, 1840.

Mr. E. D. WHITE, from the Committee on Commerce, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on Commerce, to whom were referred the letter from the Secretary of the Treasury touching the inland trade with Mexico, and the resolution relative to the establishment of ports of entry on the Arkansas and Red rivers, report :

That, in their opinion, the subject deserves the attention of the National Legislature. The advantages derivable from a properly regulated trade with the internal provinces are thought to be too plain to admit of demonstration. The plan of encouragement proposed is, to allow the benefit of drawback on goods exported over land to those countries. To a measure so simple in its nature, and so consonant with common justice, the committee are unable to discern any plausible objection. If goods conveyed by sea are entitled to a return of duties, why should they be denied the same privilege when exported by land? No substantial argument against it can be drawn from the fear of frauds on the revenue. By keeping the goods in the original packages until they reach their places of destination, they can never be brought back to the United States for sale. The cost of the transportation would be security sufficient against their return.

For the importance of the trade with those rich mineral regions, and the facilities which exist for establishing it on a footing of reciprocal benefits, the committee refer, as the best illustration of the subject, to the communication from the department, and to the documentary evidence furnished by the Representative from the State of Arkansas, embodying a mass of highly interesting information on this topic. All which is herewith submitted, accompanied by a bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, May 12, 1840.

SIR: I beg leave, through you, to submit the accompanying report and correspondence to the consideration of the Committee on Commerce. The trade to which they relate consists, on the part of the United States, mainly of cotton goods manufactured in the northern and eastern States; and on the part of Mexico, of gold and silver—either coined, or in the form of bullion. It is believed that about one-third of the goods used in carrying it on will be linsens, woollen cloths, and silks manufactured in foreign countries, subject to heavy duties when imported into the United States. Upon

these the allowance of drawbacks will be essential, as, without it, traders would seek other markets not similarly burdened. For the purpose of affording this advantage, one or more ports of entry will be necessary near our western border, and on the line of the trade within our territorial limits. From the interesting communication of M. de Valois, who is a native of Mexico, and a gentleman of great respectability and intelligence, it will be seen that, from actual experience, he regards the route by the way of the Arkansas and Red rivers not only practicable, but the nearest, cheapest, and most secure, for the introduction of goods to that portion of Mexico east of the Rocky mountains, and south of the province of Santa Fe. In this he is sustained by the opinion of Mr. Harris, as expressed in his letter, and every other person with whom I have conversed, professing any knowledge on the subject. The most suitable locations, therefore, for ports of entry, will be upon those two rivers, as contemplated by a resolution of the House now before the committee. It seems that, under existing laws, no drawback of duties is authorized on goods exported, otherwise than by sea, and in vessels of not less than thirty tons burden. Various considerations have heretofore, no doubt, operated in producing this discrimination, such as the facilities that otherwise would have been afforded in evading their payment, the inconsiderable amount of goods exported in carrying on an inland trade with foreign countries, &c. The latter, by an increase of the trade with Mexico, has ceased to exist; and the former, by adopting the plan submitted by the Secretary of the Treasury in his report, can be easily obviated. Other considerations that may have had an influence will be found, when contrasted with the advantages to be derived by encouraging the trade, of no serious consequence. A law, therefore, to remove the discrimination, by authorizing the allowance of drawbacks in all cases of exportation, will be necessary. Whether the policy of a law for this purpose will be considered by the committee as coming within the scope of their inquiry under the resolution referred to, is of course for their determination. It is apparent, however, that ports of entry would be merely auxiliary but indispensable measures in carrying out its provisions, and useless without it.

I regret that I have not the leisure to present my views more fully to the committee on the subject of this trade. I sincerely believe that, under proper encouragement, it is destined at no distant day to amount to several millions annually. Without such encouragement, it will take the direction of the Pacific or Gulf of Mexico; and in either case, England and France would compete with us for it, and the former with fair prospects of success. If secured, most of the articles used in carrying it on will be furnished by our manufactories in the northern and eastern States. In return, they will receive gold and silver. The opportunity would be afforded to the enterprising of our citizens everywhere to embark in it; whilst the frontier States would profit to some extent by its transit, and derive additional security by its civilizing influence upon the rude tribes of Indians on their borders, through whose country the trade would necessarily pass.

A map of Mexico, believed to be as nearly accurate as any extant, is also herewith submitted for the inspection of the committee. The route from Chihuahua to Red river and Fort Smith on the Arkansas, as travelled by Mr. Valois, is indicated on it, and distances noted.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EWD. CROSS.

HON. EDWARD CURTIS,
Chairman of the Committee on Commerce.

P. S.—Mr. Valois, Captain Harris, and another gentleman who resided for several years in the province of Chihuahua, and was concerned in working the mines of that country, as well as its trade, are now in this city, and would, I am authorized to say, take pleasure in affording any additional information in their power.

E. C.

Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, in compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, calling for information concerning the inland trade with Mexico.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, April 15, 1840.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report, in answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 6th instant, directing the Secretary of the Treasury "to communicate to this House whether, under existing laws, drawback of duties is, or in his opinion can be, allowed on goods used in carrying on an inland trade between the United States and the republic of Mexico; and whether any, and what, plan could be most conveniently adopted for that purpose. Also, any information in his power in relation to the annual amount of said trade, the route or routes by which it is carried on, and in what the same consists."

In regard to the first inquiry contained in the resolution, "whether, under existing laws, drawback of duties is, or in my opinion can be, allowed on goods used in carrying on an inland trade between the United States and the republic of Mexico," I would observe that no drawback of the duties is at present allowed on goods used in the trade mentioned; nor can such drawback be allowed, in the opinion of the department, under the provisions of existing laws regulating that subject.

With respect to the second inquiry, "whether any, and what, plan could be most conveniently adopted for that purpose," I would, in answer thereto, respectfully refer the House to the accompanying copy of a communication, addressed by the department in January, 1835, to the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, covering a report from the Comptroller of the Treasury, suggesting a plan, with suitable regulations, for the allowance of drawback on goods carried over land from Port Independence, on the Missouri river, to Sante Fe, in the province of New Mexico. These papers are marked A and B, and were printed by order of the House, and are contained in document No. 116, vol. 3, 2d session 23d Congress. The committee before mentioned reported a bill on the 21st of December, 1835, (No. 48,) embracing in its provisions the plan suggested by the Comptroller for a particular route therein specified; which, with suitable modifications, might include such other routes through which the trade over land to Mexico is, or may be, contemplated to be carried on. It is believed that the action of the committee grew out of a memorial from the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, on the subject of an inland trade to the provinces of Mexico, and an allowance of a drawback of the duties on goods used therein.

The last inquiry is in regard to "any information in my power in relation to the annual amount of said trade, the route or routes by which it is carried on, and in what the same consists."

the contents of the packages are the same as they were at the time when and the place where purchased, he is to endorse and sign a certificate accordingly, on the certificate of the custom-house officers, No. 2.

4. A similar course to be pursued when the goods arrive at the town of Independence; for which, and for other purposes, it may be deemed expedient that that place may be made a port of entry, with a surveyor to reside thereat, with the same powers as those of the surveyors of the ports specified in the act of March 2, 1831.

5. These several certificates to be presented to the consul of the United States at Santa Fe, on the arrival of the goods at that place, who is thereupon to examine the packages; and, upon being satisfied, upon evidence from the Mexican custom-house officers, that the contents thereof are the same as they were at the time and place of purchase, is to give a certificate to the owner of the goods, containing the following particulars: "I, A B, consul of the United States at Santa Fe, do hereby certify that the following packages have been brought to, and deposited in, the custom-house at this place by (here insert the name of the person by whom brought, and, if he be not the owner, the name of such owner also;) and that, upon examination of them, and upon evidence received from the Mexican custom-house officers that they contain the identical goods which, according to the certificates of the custom-house officers (here insert whether New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or New Orleans,) were in them at the time when they left the said port of (here again insert New York, &c.,) and that they were imported on the — day of —, on board the —, viz:

Name of vessel of importation.	Date of importation.	From what place made.	Marks and numbers.	Contents.	Value of articles paying ad valorem duties.	Weight, gauge, or measure, &c., paying specific duties.	Rates of duty.	Amount of duties.	Names of owners of goods.

A B, Consul of the U. S.

"SANTA FE, January, 1835."

6. The drawback to be paid to the owner of the goods, or to his order, provided the duties on the same shall have been previously secured by the collector, on the presentation at the custom-house of the port or place where the goods were purchased, of the certificate issued thereat, together with the consular and other certificates; all of which certificates are thereupon to be cancelled, by obliterating the signatures thereto, and are to accompany the account of the collector, in which a charge for the said drawback may be made, together with the receipt of the party to whom payment may be made.

7. The certificates which may be issued by the consul of the United States at Santa Fe to be regularly recorded by him in a book to be kept for that especial purpose.

The documents referred to me are returned herewith.

Respectfully,

JOS. ANDERSON.

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

Secretary of the Treasury.

C.

NEW ORLEANS, *September 10, 1839.*

SIR: The chamber of commerce of this city have had under consideration the advantages which would result to the trade and revenue of the United States, by such modification of the revenue laws as would admit of allowance of debenture on merchandise exported by land to countries west of Louisiana. With the view of bringing this subject under the consideration of the Government, they appointed a committee to draught a memorial to Congress, praying that the revenue laws in relation to drawback and debentures should be so modified, with such restrictions as may appear proper and necessary, as to allow the exports by land the same debenture now granted on exports by sea. The committee being under an impression that it was probably within the power of the Secretary of the Treasury, under the laws of 1805, to permit the export of merchandise, for the benefit of drawback, by steamboats, to countries lying west of Louisiana, respectfully submit the subject to your consideration, previous to resorting to a memorial on the subject, which might create more publicity than they deem judicious, as the Mexican Government, with their *jealousy* toward our citizens, which has already prohibited the importation of nearly every article of domestic manufacture of the United States, might take more effective steps to prevent their introduction through this, the only channel left. On reference, we find the law of 1799 (section 75) prohibits the allowance of drawback on goods exported to any foreign state immediately adjoining the United States; and article 92 (same law) prohibits the allowance of drawback on goods exported otherwise than by sea. The law of 1805 (section 2) amends or alters the law of 1799, and allows the drawback on goods exported to ports westward and southward of Louisiana, but says, "exported from the United States, or district of Mississippi, in the manner prescribed by law." Now, whether it requires that the goods should positively go by sea beyond the limits of the United States, is to be decided; and as many think that, as the law says westward of Louisiana, it clearly admits of a consideration that would grant the drawback, as, on reference to the map, a westward direction will not reach the sea before striking the Pacific, thereby rendering the present construction a nullity.

The subject has been more immediately brought to the notice of the chamber of commerce of New Orleans, by the fact of the arrival recently of a large caravan from the province of Chihuahua, at a point on Red river above the raft, and thence by steam conveyance to this city, bringing a large amount in bullion for investment in merchandise. Chihuahua being one of the richest districts of Mexico in valuable mineral productions, its

mines producing a large proportion of the precious metals exported from Mexico; and isolated as it is from direct communication with the ports on the Pacific and on the bay of Mexico, you, sir, will readily perceive the importance to the United States of securing a direct trade in bullion with that and the adjoining provinces. The benefit of inland drawback would measurably, if not entirely, direct that trade by the Red river route, instead of the circuitous one through the Mexican ports on the bay.

This will more readily appear by a comparison of the distances from Chihuahua to the following places, and the cost of transportation from them, respectively; and also a view of the heavy charges and duty payable on bullion before exportation:

The distance from Chihuahua to Matamoras is 1,200 miles; cost of transportation \$17 per 100 pounds.

The distance from Chihuahua to Tampico is 1,400 miles; cost of transportation \$23 23 per 100 pounds.

The distance from Chihuahua to Vera Cruz is 1,600 miles; cost of transportation \$25 per 100 pounds.

The distance from Chihuahua to the city of Mexico is 1,200 miles; cost of transportation \$16 per 100 pounds.

The distance from Chihuahua to Shreveport, on Red river, is 800 miles.

The distance from Chihuahua to Santa Fe is 600 miles.

The distance from Chihuahua to Quaymas, Pacific, is 500 miles.

This route is considered impracticable for transportation. From Santa Fe to St. Louis, Missouri, the distance is computed to be 1,400 miles. The laws of Mexico prohibit the exportation of bullion: it is subject to 5 per cent. for assaying; coinage at Government mint, 5 per cent.; export duty on dollars, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.: making $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to which bullion is subject before it can be legally exported through the Mexican ports.

Requesting the favor of an early reply, I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. W. ZACHARIE,

Chairman Committee N. O. Chamber of Commerce.

HON. LEVI WOODBURY,

Secretary of the Treasury.

D.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *September 27, 1839.*

SIR: I am in the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, in behalf of the committee appointed by the chamber of commerce of the city of New Orleans to make inquiry upon the subject of exporting merchandise (entitled to debenture) "by land to countries west of Louisiana," &c.

In answer to your inquiry, whether it is "within the power of the Secretary of the Treasury, under the law of 1805, to permit the export of merchandise for benefit of drawback, by steamboats, to countries lying west of Louisiana," to wit, "to be carried by steamboats from New Orleans to a point on the Red river, and from thence by land across the country to the province of Chihuahua, in Mexico," I would remark, that the department, on due examination of the subject, does not consider itself authorized, under the existing laws regulating the manner in which goods shall be exported,

to entitle them to drawback, to sanction the arrangement proposed. In this opinion the Comptroller of the Treasury also concurs.

To accomplish the object desired by the chamber of commerce, some change or modification of the existing laws by Congress must first take place; and the subject has already been before that body for several years.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY,
Secretary of the Treasury.

J. W. ZACHARIE, Esq.,
Chairman Com. Chamber of Commerce, New Orleans.

E.

NEW ORLEANS, October 8, 1839.

SIR: Your letter of the 27th ultimo, in reply to mine of the 10th of September, has been duly received; and, on referring it to the chamber, several of the members are under the impression that the question has not been properly put to you, whether goods shipped per steamboat to a foreign country, (that is, to Jonesborough or Pecan point, on the Red river, in Texas,) without being landed at any intermediate point of the United States, could not be entitled to drawback.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. W. ZACHARIE,
*Chairman Committee of the New Orleans
Chamber of Commerce.*

HON. LEVI WOODBURY,
Secretary of the Treasury.

F.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, October 30, 1839.

SIR: Your letter of the 8th instant, in explanation of the inquiry submitted in your former communication of the 10th ultimo, was duly received.

The inquiry now proposed by you, in behalf of the chamber of commerce of New Orleans, is, "whether goods shipped per steamboat to a foreign country, (that is, to Jonesborough or Pecan point, on the Red river, in Texas,) without being landed at any intermediate point of the United States, could not be entitled to drawback."

You will perceive, by the accompanying copy of a letter from the Department of State, that, owing to the boundary-line between the United States and Texas not having yet been surveyed and marked, it cannot be determined, at this time, whether the places mentioned in your letter are embraced within the limits of the United States, or of Texas.

Under these circumstances, the department does not feel justified in the expression of an opinion as to the right of drawback on goods shipped to either of the places mentioned.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY,
Secretary of the Treasury.

J. W. ZACHARIE, Esq.,
*Chairman of the Committee of
the Chamber of Commerce, New Orleans.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, October 25, 1839.

SIR: In answer to the inquiry in your letter of yesterday, I have to refer you to the treaty with Mexico; according to the stipulations of which, the boundary between the United States and Texas is to be defined and marked. As that boundary has not yet been surveyed, it is not in the power of the department to say at what point the due-north line from the intersection of the Sabine river with the thirty-second parallel of latitude will strike the Red river; nor, consequently, whether Pecan point and Jonesborough will, when the line is surveyed and marked, be left within our limits, or those of Texas. By the arrangement between the United States and Texas, however, all places, over which we have heretofore exercised jurisdiction, are to be deemed within our territory until the boundary-line is run and marked.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN FORSYTH.

Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,
Secretary of the Treasury.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *April 9, 1840.*

DEAR SIR: The accompanying resolutions are forwarded to you, under the impression that, from your long residence and connexion with the army on the western frontier, you will be able to afford very useful and accurate information on the subjects to which they refer. I have to request, therefore, that you will communicate any knowledge you may have in relation to the annual amount of the inland trade between the United States and Mexico; in what it consists; the route or routes by which it is carried on; if through the country occupied by the western Indians, its effect upon those Indians; and any information in your power in relation to the annual production of the gold and silver mines of the Mexican provinces of Chihuahua and Santa Fe.

On the subject of a port of entry on the Arkansas river, no particular point was contemplated, although Van Buren is named. The object was to embrace Fort Smith, or any other place that might be considered most suitable, near the head of navigation on the river, and near our western border.

An answer at your earliest convenience is requested.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD CROSS,

Captain A. HARRIS.—*Present.*

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to communicate to this House whether, under existing laws, a drawback of duties is, or in his opinion can be, allowed on goods used in carrying on an inland trade between the United States and the republic of Mexico; and whether any, and what, place could be most conveniently adopted for that purpose; also, any information in his power in relation to the annual amount of said trade, the route or routes by which it is carried on, and in what the same consists.

Resolved, That the Committee on Commerce be instructed to inquire into the expediency of establishing ports of entry at or near Van Buren, on the Arkansas, and at some point near the mouth of Little river, on Red river.

WASHINGTON, April 10, 1840.

SIR: In answer to your communication of yesterday, enclosing two resolutions of the House of Representatives on the subject of establishing ports of entry on Red and Arkansas rivers, and requesting information as to the inland trade between the United States and the interior Mexican States, I very cheerfully comply, as far as my knowledge on those subjects extends.

The principal inland trade between the United States and Mexico has heretofore been carried on from St. Louis to Santa Fe; the other interior States being supplied, to a great extent, from Santa Fe. The annual amount of this trade has been estimated at from two to three millions of dollars. In return for goods, our traders receive gold and silver; there is, however, quite an extensive trade in mules. The States of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango, must, however, be supplied from some other market; the route by the way of Santa Fe being so circuitous, that it will be impossible to carry on the trade to more southern States through that place, and compete with goods brought but half the distance.

It is about nine hundred miles from St. Louis to Santa Fe, and as many more from Santa Fe to Chihuahua. During the last year a few caravans have tried a new route. One large party came in direct from Chihuahua to the head of navigation on Red river, bringing with it about \$290,000 in gold and silver, and a large number of mules. They report that a road can be obtained from the head of navigation of Arkansas or Red river, which will not be over 900 or 1,000 miles to Chihuahua—about half the distance now travelled to that State, via Santa Fe; and that, if some assistance could be had to improve the route, it must eventually secure a large portion of the valuable trade to that country.

The town of Chihuahua is situated in latitude 29½ north, about 800 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and about the same distance from the Pacific ocean. It is the emporium of the three States of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango—the most valuable mining districts in all Mexico. It is certain, in my opinion, that if any effort on the part of our Government is made to foster and protect the trade to those States, it will secure a market for an immense amount of our manufactures, and lead to the introduction of millions of dollars of gold and silver annually. Without something is done very soon, it will be lost to us. The British have been, and are now, making strong efforts to secure and monopolize this trade. Goods are sent

to the Pacific, and transported across the mountains—a distance of 800 miles.

The republic of Texas will also turn her attention to it as soon as the difficulties now existing in that country are partially quieted. She will have her ports of entry on the head-waters of her rivers, and afford every facility for carrying on the trade; and unless we have a fair start with them, our part of the business will be totally cut off. Will not our Government extend a helping hand to her hardy and adventurous citizens in the prosecution of so laudable an object, and, by so doing, confer such immense benefit upon the whole country? Why is it that an inland trade should not be entitled to the same privileges and immunities as our commerce on the seas? It certainly cannot be that it is less worthy of the attention of the Government because the goods are transported in wagons and on mules, instead of vessels.

There is another and very important consideration that should induce our Government to attend to this trade, and promote the facilities for carrying it on. The route to the Mexican States is entirely through the country of the wild Indians of the prairies; and I am convinced that the best method of establishing and maintaining a friendly intercourse with them is by the opening of a few roads through the country, and keeping up a trade with them. The advantage of being on good terms with the whites is brought plainly and palpably before them. They know nothing about a treaty; they have no ideas of moral obligation. Indians, and particularly the wild savages in that region, require a practical illustration of the effects of a treaty, before they can comprehend its utility, or the reason for them to observe it. Convince them that it is to their interest, and they will be sure to act accordingly.

The Government assisted in making what is called the Santa Fe trace, and have occasionally furnished escorts for the protection of the caravans. What has been the result? The State of Missouri is at this day the soundest in the Union in her monetary affairs. She is filled with specie; and the interior Mexican States have supplied it. She will always have the Santa Fe trade; Arkansas can secure that for Chihuahua. A road should be made from Fort Smith, crossing the Red river above the mouth of the Faux Ouachita; and the road now leading to Fort Towson should be continued, to intersect the road from Fort Smith. The expense of making these roads is but very little, the country being nearly all prairie; but it is necessary to survey a direct line, and mark it out. As an instance of the small cost of roads in that country: one was made last summer, under the direction of Major Belknap, of the army, from Fort Smith to Fort Towson, 137 miles, for less than \$3,000. Roads in a westerly direction from the Arkansas frontier can be made at half that cost.

I consider Fort Smith as decidedly the most suitable place for a port of entry on the Arkansas river. It is an important military post, immediately on the western border, and at the head of low-water navigation. It is also the crossing-point of the great military road from the Upper Mississippi, along the western frontier to Red river; and the fort is situated on that side of the river from which the trading caravans must start. In every respect, I have no hesitation in saying that it is by far the best selection that could be made. As to the point on Red river, I cannot speak with so much certainty; not being so well acquainted with that country. As far as I know; the place mentioned in your resolution is as suitable as any.

I trust, sir, that your exertions to call the attention of the Government to the importance of this whole subject will meet with that success it so richly merits; and I am convinced that, when properly understood and appreciated, no effort will be spared to carry out your views. It will open a wide field of enterprise, not only for our western men, but for the adventurous of the whole country. It will hasten the settlement and cultivation of our frontier lands; and, if the trade is carried on to the extent that is confidently anticipated, it will furnish more of the precious metals than any other source. The mines of that region are inexhaustible. If, under all the disadvantages it has heretofore labored, so much has been done, what may we not expect if the General Government will but extend to it that protection and assistance it so freely gives to our commerce on the ocean?

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. HARRIS.

Hon. E. CROSS, *House of Representatives.*

WASHINGTON CITY, *April 20, 1840.*

SIR: Having understood from a gentleman who travelled with you to this city, that you had been for several years engaged in working the gold and silver mines of Chihuahua, in the republic of Mexico; and learning from the same source that you had also been concerned to a considerable extent in the inland trade carried on between the United States and that republic; I take the liberty of requesting that you will communicate any knowledge you may have on these subjects, in answer to the following inquiries:

1. What amount of gold and silver is annually produced by the mines of that portion of Mexico east of the Rocky mountains, and where and how is it disposed of?
2. What number of mines are there, and how many persons employed in working them?
3. Are they nearly exhausted, or considered inexhaustible?
4. Is the present plan of working them the best, in your judgment, that could be adopted; or could some other be introduced, by which the annual yield would be increased?
5. What is the population of the country, and the kind and amount of goods required for its annual consumption?
6. Would the allowance of a drawback of duties on goods imported into the United States, and in carrying on the trade, have any, and what, influence upon it?
7. Be pleased to state the usual routes of carrying it on, with their respective advantages?
8. Are cotton goods manufactured in the United States, or those of British fabric, preferred?
9. Would it be as cheap, convenient, and practicable, for the citizens of Chihuahua, Durango, and Santa Fe, or any one or more of those provinces, to procure their necessary supplies by an inland-route from the United States, as from Guaymas on the Gulf of California, or Matamoras on the Rio del Norte?
10. Are there any goods manufactured in the provinces named in the last inquiry, and, if so, what kind, and to what extent?

Any information you may be pleased to communicate, in answer to these inquiries, or in relation to the agricultural and other resources of your interesting section of the North American continent, will be very thankfully acknowledged by

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD CROSS.

Mr. M. DE VALOIS.—*Present.*

[Original in the Spanish language.—Translation.]

WASHINGTON, April 23, 1840.

SIR: I acknowledge your very civil letter of the 20th instant, and will with great pleasure reply, as far as my knowledge will allow, to your inquiries touching the present product of the mines of Chihuahua, the importance of a direct trade between the United States and that province, as well as the other particulars referred to in the communication.

The mines of the department of Chihuahua have, at some periods, produced very great quantities of gold and silver. The most recent period of that sort was that from 1824 to 1828, when a single mine of the district of Jesus Maria, situated on the range of mountains to the west of Chihuahua, yielded more than \$11,000,000 in silver, mixed more or less with gold. Those excessive yields (called in that country *bonanzas*) are not frequent; yet all the mines have a common regular average of production, dependent on the circumstances of the proprietors, and the industry with which the mines are worked. I believe that the present yield may be estimated at from two to two and a half millions a year, because the most of the mines are paralyzed by the excessive price of quicksilver, which for some time past has been as high as \$170 or \$180 the quintal. This ingredient is indispensable seeing that in that country the metals are for the most part separated and obtained by the process of amalgamation. The abovementioned products are chiefly sent abroad by the ports of Mazatlan and Guaymas on the South sea and Gulf of California, in exchange for English goods, which are generally brought in through those places; and the remainder find their way to Matamoras and some other ports on the Gulf of Mexico.

Among the principal mineral districts of Chihuahua are reckoned the following: the Parral, Jesus Maria, Calvo, Batopilar, Cosihuriachi, and Santa Eulalia, in which there are more than four hundred mines in blast. Silver is extracted from the most of them; gold from a few. Those which are now in operation employ from twelve to fifteen thousand operatives. Generally speaking, the mines of Chihuahua are new, and have had but slight exploration. The gold region has been but very imperfectly examined, and fresh mineral veins are constantly being discovered, especially in the great chain of the Cordilleras.

The method of working the mines hitherto pursued in Chihuahua, and generally throughout the Mexican territory, is sufficiently economical; and I believe that the only improvement necessary to be introduced would be the application of steam to facilitate the process of obtaining and separating the metals. But that which would, doubtless, best put the mines in motion, and cause the business to flourish, is the system of joint-stock companies, with small shares—a thing hitherto unknown in that part of Mexico. There the mines are usually worked by one, two, three, or at most four propri-

etors, of limited fortune, who cannot prosecute the business with the energy necessary to make it productive, or who ruin themselves in their attempts to compass such a costly undertaking. The joint-stock plain, on a proper scale, could not fail to furnish satisfactory results to those concerned, and prove at the same time highly beneficial to the country.

The department of Chihuahua has a population of one hundred and forty thousand; and, from what I have observed, I am convinced that their annual consumption of goods does not amount to less than two and a half or three millions of dollars. The greater part of the goods thus consumed is received, as I have already stated, from England, through the ports on the Pacific, or very small portions through the ports on the Gulf of Mexico, or by the way of Santa Fe.

From their inland situation, having no seaport within less than six hundred miles, the inhabitants of Chihuahua have to pay very high prices for foreign objects of consumption, inasmuch as these wares are all procured from traders who have purchased them at some of our ports; and because the absence of navigable rivers, canals, and even good wagon-roads, compels us to transport our merchandise on the backs of mules—an expedient which is attended with great expense and delay.

The transactions through Santa Fe with Chihuahua have been extremely circumscribed, and cannot be carried to any great extent by the traders from Missouri; because, as you are well aware, their goods are burdened with the drawback. Besides, it is a thousand miles' journey, through the desert, to that independency. Like the rest of the districts of New Mexico, its population is sparse, and consequently consumes but little. Hence the traders are usually obliged to undertake a second journey of six hundred miles or more to Chihuahua, where they commonly arrive with their assortments greatly damaged, and but seldom realize much profit on their sales.

Having turned our thoughts to the subject, and become convinced of the feasibility of opening a new route of direct intercourse with the State of Arkansas, two other gentlemen of Chihuahua and myself, during the last year, determined to take the journey. With fifty men at our own charge, and fifty more furnished us as an escort by the Governor of that department, we started from Chihuahua on the 3d of April, 1839, taking with us upwards of five hundred mules and seven wagons, in which we carried our effects and provisions, as well as arms to defend ourselves against any attacks from the wild Indians inhabiting the intervening territory. From the city of Chihuahua to the last settlement on our frontier, (a fortified post called "Del Norte," on the banks of the Rio Bravo,) our path led through a region which was not unknown, and which was occupied at intervals by inhabitants. Leaving that point, we struck into the unexplored trackless desert, relying wholly on our map and compass. We had expected to encounter obstacles to the passage of our wagons, and had provided ourselves with the requisite implements to remove impediments. We had also calculated on finding streams far between, and that both men and beasts would, in consequence, be exposed to the sufferings of thirst. But what was our surprise and our joy on finding that the way was level and firm, bounded by rich pasturage, interspersed with wood, and traversed every two, three, and four miles, by living brooks of wholesome and refreshing water? Yes, sir; the route we came is the best and the shortest that any one could reasonably desire between the two countries. We had the gratification of be-

ing the first to traverse it, and that without any mishap. Our daily stages were generally from one stream to another, where we encamped for the night, lest we should not find water farther on. For this reason, our progress each day was from three to ten miles—very seldom extending to fifteen. From the best estimates we were enabled to make, from Chihuahua to the point at which we touched the Red river, fifty miles above the mouth of Faux Ouachita, the distance does not exceed six hundred miles. This calculation would make it eight hundred miles to Fort Smith or Van Buren, on the Arkansas river.

If the Government of the United States should think proper to extend the benefit of drawback to goods exported by this new route, I have no doubt that the trade between this country and Chihuahua would become very important. The goods could be conveyed, in wagons, from the Arkansas river to our post, "Del Norte," (which is a port of entry,) in forty or forty-five days, at less cost, and in less time, than they are now carried from the seaports on mules. I am of opinion that the chief part of the goods consumed in the States of Durango and Zacatecas, amounting to not less than five or six millions, might be imported by this road, on more advantageous terms than they could be by the ports of Matamoras and others, by reason of the remoteness of these ports, and of the unavoidable expense and delay of mule transportation.

The consumption of cotton fabrics in Mexico is so great, as to be equal to the half, or more, in value of all the goods introduced. The fabrics of the United States are always preferred, because they are more substantial and durable than the English. This article is, therefore, one of great importance in the Mexican markets; and the United States might, for many years, secure the privilege of furnishing the supply, seeing that the manufactures of Mexico are still in their infancy, and cannot advance much in the unfortunate state of things existing in that quarter. But, I repeat, in order to give to the direct trade between Arkansas and Chihuahua the increase of which it is susceptible, it is indispensably necessary that the goods should have the benefit of drawback, just as they have it when exported by sea. Without this advantage, traders would have no prospect of gain to induce them to use the land route, where they would be subjected to greater burdens, with less chance of profit, than if they resorted to the highway of the ocean.

Such, sir, are the reflections which have occurred to me from the perusal of your letter. If you desire any other item of information which it is in my power to give, it will afford me pleasure to supply it.

Your obedient servant,

M. DE VALOIS.

Hon. EDWARD CROSS,
Representative of Arkansas.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *May 5, 1840.*

SIR: I take the liberty of forwarding, for your information, and for such use as you may deem proper to make of it, as a member of the House of Representatives, the accompanying copy of a communication from Captain George Andrews, a judicious and intelligent officer of the army, on the subject of the importance and the practicability, at a com-

paratively small annual expense, of keeping open the navigation of the Red river. Captain Andrews was recently employed on the duty of forwarding some army subsistence up the river, and had an excellent opportunity for acquiring the information which he furnishes.

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

J. R. POINSETT.

HON. EDWARD CROSS, *House of Representatives.*

WASHINGTON CITY, May —1840.

SIR : The following facts and views having suggested themselves to me, while acting under your orders, were noted down for my own information ; but having incidentally shown them to several wealthy and intelligent planters on Red river, they urged me, deeming them of some importance, to submit them for your consideration. I therefore, with great diffidence, lay them before you for your disposal, should they be thought of any consequence.

1. The country between New Orleans and Fort Towson (say 1,000 miles) embraces a greater extent of fine cotton land than the same distance in any other part of the United States—perhaps in the world.

2. It is the decided opinion of the most intelligent steamboat captains, that, with a small annual expense by the Government, the Red river, from the mouth to Fort Towson, can eventually be rendered the best and safest navigable river in the western country.

3. The increased *sale* and *value* of the public lands above the raft, it is believed, will amply repay the cost in keeping it open.

4. The recent attempt, and partially successful one, to divert the Mexican trade from the usual route, to some point on the Red river about Jonesborough, or Bryerly's landing, it is believed, would be successful, could there be a certainty of finding the Red river free of all obstructions from the raft and snags above Fulton (Ark.) to those points.

5. The importance of this trade to the United States is well known. Their "returns" being gold, gold-dust, silver, and mules, principally in exchange for coarse manufactured cottons.

6. The necessity of the free and unobstructed navigation of the Red river will be more apparent, as soon as the United States revenue laws shall be extended along the borders of Texas.

7. The production of cotton above the raft at present is estimated at 22,000 bales, averaging 400 pounds each bale. Should the raft be kept open, it is well ascertained that its increase will be at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum.

8. The importance, in the present unsettled relations of the Indian tribes on the upper Red river, of an easy and free access to and from Fort Towson, is believed to be a sufficient reason and full consideration for any expenditures that have been or shall be in future made by the Government.

9. The country above the raft rapidly filling up with cotton-planters, their protection from any outbreak of their slaves becomes a strong consideration with the Government, in the location and ready access to any military stations in that country.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

GEO. ANDREWS,

Captain 6th Infantry.

Brig. Gen. GEORGE GIBSON,

Cem. Gen. Subs. U. S. army, Washington, D. C.